

PATENT COOPERATION TREATY

From the
INTERNATIONAL SEARCHING AUTHORITY

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PCT

WRITTEN OPINION OF THE
INTERNATIONAL SEARCHING AUTHORITY

(PCT Rule 43bis.1)

		Date of mailing (day/month/year) 11 APR 2008
Applicant's or agent's file reference 06975-674WO1		FOR FURTHER ACTION See paragraph 2 below
International application No. PCT/US05/45663	International filing date (day/month/year) 20 December 2005 (20.12.2005)	Priority date (day/month/year) 20 December 2004 (20.12.2004)
International Patent Classification (IPC) or both national classification and IPC IPC: G06F 15/16(2006.01);G06F 3/00(2006.01) USPC: 709/206;715/758		
Applicant AMERICA ONLINE, INC.		

1. This opinion contains indications relating to the following items:

- Box No. I Basis of the opinion
- Box No. II Priority
- Box No. III Non-establishment of opinion with regard to novelty, inventive step and industrial applicability
- Box No. IV Lack of unity of invention
- Box No. V Reasoned statement under Rule 43bis.1(a)(i) with regard to novelty, inventive step or industrial applicability; citations and explanations supporting such statement
- Box No. VI Certain documents cited
- Box No. VII Certain defects in the international application
- Box No. VIII Certain observations on the international application

2. FURTHER ACTION

If a demand for international preliminary examination is made, this opinion will be considered to be a written opinion of the International Preliminary Examining Authority ("IPEA") except that this does not apply where the applicant chooses an Authority other than this one to be the IPEA and the chosen IPEA has notified the International Bureau under Rule 66.1bis(b) that written opinions of this International Searching Authority will not be so considered.

If this opinion is, as provided above, considered to be a written opinion of the IPEA, the applicant is invited to submit to the IPEA a written reply together, where appropriate, with amendments, before the expiration of 3 months from the date of mailing of Form PCT/ISA/220 or before the expiration of 22 months from the priority date, whichever expires later.

For further options, see Form PCT/ISA/220.

3. For further details, see notes to Form PCT/ISA/220.

Name and mailing address of the ISA/ US Mail Stop PCT, Attn: ISA/US Commissioner for Patents P.O. Box 1450 Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450 Facsimile No. (571) 273-3201	Date of completion of this opinion 25 March 2008 (25.03.2008)	Authorized officer <i>Jeffrey Pwu</i> Jeffrey Pwu Telephone No. 571-270-1896
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Form PCT/ISA/237 (cover sheet) (April 2007)

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Box No. I Basis of this opinion

1. With regard to the language, this opinion has been established on the basis of:
 the international application in the language in which it was filed
 a translation of the international application into _____, which is the language of a translation furnished for the purposes of international search (Rules 12.3(a) and 23.1(b)).
2. This opinion has been established taking into account the rectification of an obvious mistake authorized by or notified to this Authority under Rule 91 (Rule 43bis, I(a))
3. With regard to any nucleotide and/or amino acid sequence disclosed in the international application, this opinion has been established on the basis of:
 - a. type of material
 a sequence listing
 table(s) related to the sequence listing
 - b. format of material
 on paper
 in electronic form
 - c. time of filing/furnishing
 contained in the international application as filed.
 filed together with the international application in electronic form.
 furnished subsequently to this Authority for the purposes of search.
4. In addition, in the case that more than one version or copy of a sequence listing and/or table(s) relating thereto has been filed or furnished, the required statements that the information in the subsequent or additional copies is identical to that in the application as filed or does not go beyond the application as filed, as appropriate, were furnished.

5. Additional comments:

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Box No. V Reasoned statement under Rule 43 bis.1(a)(i) with regard to novelty, inventive step or industrial applicability; citations and explanations supporting such statement

1. Statement

Novelty (N)	Claims <u>NONE</u>	YES
	Claims <u>1-33</u>	NO

Inventive step (IS)	Claims <u>NONE</u>	YES
	Claims <u>1-33</u>	NO

Industrial applicability (IA)	Claims <u>1-33</u>	YES
	Claims <u>NONE</u>	NO

2. Citations and explanations:

Please See Continuation Sheet

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Supplemental Box

In case the space in any of the preceding boxes is not sufficient.

V. 2. Citations and Explanations:

1. Claims 1-33 lack novelty under PCT Article 33(2) as being anticipated by March et al.
2. Independent claim 1: March discloses a method for categorizing users, the method comprising: maintaining a list of identifiers that are selected by a first user and for which online presence information is made perceptible through the list, the list including one or more categories into which the identifiers are categorized ("Embodiments of the present invention enable a user to use buddy lists to represent different relationships and to present the user with logical visual representations of these buddy lists." [0015] and see figure 2 and abstract); accessing at least one attribute associated with an identifier for which online presence information is to be made perceptible through the list ("Upon logging in, User A may see a visual representation of these buddy lists, with information regarding whether any of the individuals are also online." [0005-0006],[0015]); accessing attributes stored relative to at least one of the categories ("According to embodiments of the present invention, users may create buddy lists, rank the contents of the lists (or have the contents ranked automatically) according to predefined relationship" [0017]); comparing the attributes associated with the identifier to the stored attributes([0006],[0015-0018], [0022-0024], [0032]); based on results of the comparison, identifying at least one category within the list that corresponds to the identifier; and categorizing the identifier into the identified category ([0006],[0015-0018]).
3. Independent claim 25: March discloses a computer program stored on a computer-readable medium or a propagated signal that, when executed, generates a graphical user interface on a display device for using a computer to manage a list of users of an electronic communications system with which electronic messages may be exchanged, the graphical user interface comprising: a participant list display associated with a user of the participant list display that includes users of the electronic communications system ("Embodiments of the present invention enable a user to use buddy lists to represent different relationships and to present the user with logical visual representations of these buddy lists." [0015] and see figure 2 and abstract), each included user being associated with at least one group included in the participant list display based on at least one attribute of the included user and at least one stored attribute of the at least one group ([0005-0006],[0015-0018]).
4. Independent claim 32: March discloses a machine-accessible medium that when accessed, results in a machine performing operations for categorizing users comprising:

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Supplemental Box

In case the space in any of the preceding boxes is not sufficient.

maintaining a list of identifiers that are selected by a first user and for which online presence information is made perceivable through the list, the list including one or more categories into which the identifiers are categorized ("Embodiments of the present invention enable a user to use buddy lists to represent different relationships and to present the user with logical visual representations of these buddy lists." [0015] and see figure 2 and abstract);
accessing at least one attribute associated with an identifier for which online presence information is to be made perceivable through the list ("Upon logging in, User A may see a visual representation of these buddy lists, with information regarding whether any of the individuals are also online." [0005-0006], [0015] and see figure 2);
accessing attributes stored relative to at least one of the categories ("According to embodiments of the present invention, users may create buddy lists, rank the contents of the lists (or have the contents ranked automatically) according to predefined relationship" [0017]);
comparing the attributes associated with the identifier to the stored attributes ([0006],[0015-0018], [0022-0024], [0032]);
based on results of the comparison, identifying at least one category within the list that corresponds to the identifier; and categorizing the identifier into the identified category ([0006], [0015-0018]).

5. Independent claim 33: March discloses a method for categorizing users, the method comprising:
maintaining a list of identifiers that are selected by a first user, the list including one or more categories into which the identifiers are categorized ("Embodiments of the present invention enable a user to use buddy lists to represent different relationships and to present the user with logical visual representations of these buddy lists." [0015] and see figure 2 and abstract);
accessing at least one attribute associated with an identifier included within through the list ("Upon logging in, User A may see a visual representation of these buddy lists, with information regarding whether any of the individuals are also online." [0005-0006], [0015] and see figure 2);
accessing attributes stored relative to at least one of the categories; comparing the attributes associated with the identifier to the stored attributes ("According to embodiments of the present invention, users may create buddy lists, rank the contents of the lists (or have the contents ranked automatically) according to predefined relationship" [0017]);
based on results of the comparison, identifying at least one category within the list that corresponds to the identifier ([0017-0018], [0022-0024],[0032]); and categorizing the identifier into the identified category ([0017-0018]).

6. Dependent claims 2-24, 26-31 do not contain any features which, in combination with the features of any claim to which they refer, meet the requirement of PCT in respect of novelty

7. Claims 1-33 the criteria set out in PCT Article 33(4), and thus has industrial applicability because the subject matter claimed can be made or used in industry.